

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** Monroe Community College

**Application ID:** 13AC145771

**Program Name:** Rochester AmeriCorps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant provides a compelling need in the Rochester City School District (RCSD) that includes the City of Rochester having the highest poverty rate in New York State and seventh in the nation (U.S. Census); 85% of the students being of low income; and 97% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

(+) The applicant provides data, including from the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center and the U.S. Department of Education that ties the role income plays in supporting student attainment and engagement which further establishes the need for the proposed project.

(+) The applicant provided detailed evidence to support the needs of the targeted community. The targeted population is presented with job loss, violence, poverty, and limited economic opportunity. The median household income in the City of Rochester is only \$30,100.

(+) The New York State (NYS) Department of Education identified the target population in 2012 as having the lowest performance ranking statewide and NYS standardized tests indicated the district's pass rate is only 26% for grade three and by grade eight a dismal 18%.

(+) The applicant provided a clear vision of why this target population was selected for service by providing compelling needs assessment, for example, only a 46% graduation on-time rate, a need for expanded school schedules for learning new skills, and a lack of opportunity for students to succeed.

(+) The applicant requests 45 full-time AmeriCorps members that will be divided into two groups and will include 33 Members involved in selected elementary and high schools and 12 Members serving in a community-based pre-collegiate program. The proposed staffing appears to be appropriate for the scope of the proposal.

(+) The outlined activities for Members to support the pre-collegiate program are clear and specific. The applicant has provided a detailed menu of services that is clear on how Members will assist prospective college students understand and navigate the college application process.

(+) The applicant describes what services will not be provided if the pre-collegiate program is left with current resources that includes the Counselor-to-Student ratio remaining at 1:280.

(+) The applicant describes AmeriCorps members' activities and the roles and/or responsibilities were clearly presented. For example, the activities will focus on addressing services to improve students' academic engagement. AmeriCorps will place cadres of Members in two or three targeted elementary schools and one secondary school plus in selected community-based pre-collegiate programs.

(+) The applicant describes an evidence-based model where AmeriCorps members will monitor performance indicators such as attendance, suspensions, course grades, credits and provide individualized attention and services to students.

(+) The applicant describes specific measured Outputs by the end of the grant that include: AmeriCorps members having served with 4,300 RCSD students and at least 2,610 will have completed the program.

(+) Monroe Community College describes how they will report the impact annually by utilizing pre- and post- testing and instruments-standardized tests such as the Rochester City School District Early Warning System, Child Rating Scale, and different scales developed by the Children's Institute.

(+) Monroe Community College describes how the Performance Measure Targets were developed: in partnership with Rochester City School District officials and with staff from two pre-college programs and the Children's Institute.

(+) As a current grantee, the applicant describes its' impact: exceeded the determined targeted levels in services at thirteen (13) sites during its most recent program, have also exceeded in activities related to financial literacy and employment readiness and training, and has been reviewed and stated as a valuable program in a published external evaluation report.

(-) Monroe Community College does not provide specific evidence on academic achievement on the core subjects, on students' disengaged behaviors, or on the sense of belonging of the student population in the priority schools or in schools under improvement grants. There is also a lack of documentation of the severity of the need in the priority schools regarding indicators of student academic disengagement.

(-) The applicant organization lacked a detailed discussion of how the proposed slot types align with the program design.

(-) The applicant indicted that they will use one Member slot to serve intensively with 20 students. It is not clear if one Member per 20 students is adequate.

(-) The applicant describes the measured results of the students that will be supported but lacks specific information on how they define the improvement.

